

## COVID-19, Multi-morbidity and the elderly

**Ikwewezi FM afternoon drive show hosting Epidemiologist, Prof Refilwe Nancy Phaswana-Mafuya**



The economic benefits of a healthier and longer life are almost immeasurable. As health care costs become increasingly unaffordable, prevention is a critical, feasible, efficient, affordable and cost-saving approach.

Prof Nancy Phaswana-Mafuya's research on global AGEing and adult health brought about a new view on health among the elderly, especially relevant today facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

The elderly population is especially vulnerable. Attention to the problems of hypertension and multi-morbidity were made, which hadn't received much visibility before. This study improved the understanding of the health of older South Africans in comparison to other countries.

She won the prestigious 2016/2017 TW Kambule-NSTF Award: Researcher, 15 years after obtaining a PhD, for her contribution to science, engineering and technology (SET) and innovation in South Africa (SA).

At the time of winning the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) award, Prof Phaswana-Mafuya was based at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). She led the ground-breaking study on global AGEing and adult health (SAGE Wave 1) in collaboration with the National Department of Health and World Health Organization that used rigorous scientific methods, which were never used in combination in any SA ageing survey. The study also provided information on 23 health indicators never measured nationally before.

Prof Phaswana-Mafuya serves as a panel member of the International Panel of Infectiology of Germany Research Foundation. She is also Council Member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) as well as board member of the National Research Foundation (NRF), and the Higher Health Board – the latter as a technical health expert. She also served as chair of the largest medical meeting in SA, the 9th SA AIDS Conference. SAGE explored HIV co-morbidities and multimorbidities amongst other issues. It was also conducted in Mexico, China, India, Russia and Ghana to allow multicountry comparisons.

Tune in to this radio interview with this award winning scientist to hear more about her research on complex ageing issues.

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**Frequency:** Ikwewezi FM station on 90.6 – 107.7 MHz FM

**Audio bouquet:** DSTV Channel 804

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The National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF), established in 1995, is a broadly-representative stakeholder body for all SET and innovation organisations in South Africa, which seeks to influence policy formulation and delivery.

The NSTF Awards are unique in SA, recognising the outstanding contributions of individuals and groups to SET and innovation.

The science [bursaries](#) page provides information on bursaries and bursary providers for science, engineering and related studies.

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